DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 436 515 SP 038 906

AUTHOR Young, Barbara N.; Craig, Dorothy V.
TITLE Warnings from the Field: A Study of Perceptions of Violence of Middle School Students, Middle School Preservice Teachers, Middle School Practicing Teachers, High School Students, High School Preservice Teachers, High School Practicing Teachers.
PUB DATE 1999-11-00
NOTE 11p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Educational Research Association (Point Clear, AL, November 17-19, 1999).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Educational Environment; High School Students; High Schools; Higher Education; Middle School Students; Middle School Teachers; Middle Schools; Preservice Teacher Education; *Preservice Teachers; Secondary School Teachers; *Student Attitudes; Tables (Data); *Violence

ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceptions of violence held by preservice teachers, practicing teachers, and students at the middle school and high school levels. A total of 340 participants from five schools and a teacher training university completed a survey. Researchers divided the groups of participants into two main groups labeled school (middle school perceptions and high school perceptions). They divided the two main groups into three subgroups labeled status (students, preservice teachers, and practicing teachers). The survey asked specific and general questions regarding respondents' perceptions of violence and examined whether those perceptions of school violence changed significantly according to school, status, or an interaction between school and status. Data analysis indicated that middle school respondents perceived violence as being more prevalent within their environment than did high school respondents. Preservice teachers had the highest perception of violence; practicing teachers had a somewhat lower perception of violence; and students had the lowest perception of violence. There was no significant difference between the interactions of school and status in the perceptions of school violence. (SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 436 515

MID-SOUTH EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

1999 Annual Meeting
November 17-19, 1999
Point Clear, Alabama

Warnings from the Field: A Study of Perceptions of Violence of Middle School Students, Middle School Preservice Teachers, Middle School Practicing Teachers High School Students, High School Preservice Teachers, High School Practicing Teachers

The survey asked both specific and general questions regarding the perceptions of violence held by students, preservice teachers, and practicing teaches at the middle school and high school levels. The objectives of the survey were to ascertain the various perceptions with regard to "School" and "Status," and then to determine if these perceptions of violence changed significantly according to "School," "Status," or an interaction between "School and Status."

PRESENTERS:

Barbara N. Young, Ed.D.
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN

Dorothy V. Craig, Ed.D.
Middle Tennessee State University
Murfreesboro, TN

SP038906

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

B. N. Young

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Warnings from the Field: A Study of Perceptions of Violence Middle School Students, Middle School Preservice Teachers, Middle School Practicing Teachers High School Students, High School Preservice Teachers, High School Practicing Teachers

School violence is viewed as a national problem that is becoming more serious by the day. Practicing teachers, students, and preservice teacher education students across the country are frustrated and concerned and working toward school-based interventions to reduce violence. Perceptions of violence influence practicing teachers, students, and preservice teachers in many different ways as they go about making life-altering decisions regarding career choices and educational opportunities.

Since teaching depends on habits and behaviors resulting from deeply held ways of seeing, perceiving, and valuing, perceptions are very important. This study used the basis of "perceptions" to examine survey response data on perceptions of school violence from two main groups labeled "School": Middle School Perceptions and High School Perceptions. These two main groups were then divided into three subgroups labeled "Status": Students, Preservice Teachers, Practicing Teachers; with overall combination groups being Middle School Students, Middle School Preservice Teachers, Middle School Practicing Teachers, and High School Students, High School Preservice Teachers, and High School Practicing Teachers.

The survey asked both specific and general questions regarding the perceptions of violence held by students, preservice teachers, and practicing teaches at the middle school and high school levels. The objectives of the survey were to ascertain the various perceptions with regard to "School" and "Status," and then to determine if these perceptions of violence changed significantly according to "School," "Status," or an interaction between "School and Status."

Within the "School" group, Middle School respondents perceived violence as being more prevalent within their environment than did the High School respondents. Within the "Status" group, preservice teachers had the highest perception of violence; practicing teachers had a somewhat lower perception of violence, and students had the lowest perception of violence scores on the survey as indicated by their respective mean scores. No significant difference was indicated between the interactions of "School and Status" in the perceptions of school violence.

Analysis of data and respondents' perceptions may be shared and incorporated within preservice classes in order to assist teacher education students with lesson planning, classroom management techniques, discipline systems, field placements, and student teaching experiences. Furthermore, knowledge of the differing perceptions of the school violence issue may provide the student teacher with a valuable perspective as he/she enters the field of education.

A survey instrument was designed and administered both onsite at five area schools and on campus at the teacher training university over the course of the Spring 1999 Semester. Two public middle schools and three public high schools participated in the study. These schools had approximately 1,000 students per site and were all located in a small to medium-sized city within a middle Tennessee county (population 125,000) school district. Participants self-selected as the survey was distributed to teachers, students, and preservice teachers at the various sites and completed anonymously. Completed surveys were collected, tabulated, and analyzed. The sample included a total of 340 participants (see Table 1).

Table 1: Number of Respondents in Status and School

Status	School	N
Student	MidSchool	61
	HighSchool	69
	Total	130
Preservice	MidSchool	38
	HighSchool	93
	Total	131
Practicing	MidSchool	41
	HighSchool	38
	Total	79
Total	MidSchool	140
	HighSchool	200
	Total	**340**

The survey consisted of questions 1-27 having a Likert scale response ranging from strongly agree, agree, neither agree/disagree, disagree, to strongly disagree, and questions 28-30 asking for a yes/no response from participants. After reliability analysis, items 15 and 21 were dropped due to low item correlation and items 19 and 20 were reversed due to phrasing. Percentages of various respondents to survey items according to "Status" were as follows (see Table 2).

Table 2: Percent comparison of the three status groups' responses

Statement	Group	SA	A	N	D	SD	0	Total
1. Students frequently bring weapons such as cutting instruments and firearms to school.	1	3.8	20.8	24.6	29.2	21.5	0	100
	2	9.2	42.0	13.0	26.0	9.2	0.8	100
	3	0	6.3	11.4	45.6	35.4	1.3	100
2. Most students have friends who own guns.	1	15.4	31.5	11.5	28.5	13.1	0	100
	2	17.6	47.3	16.8	14.5	3.8	0	100
	3	15.2	30.4	25.3	24.1	5.1	0	100
3. It's easy for most students to obtain a gun.	1	13.8	27.7	32.3	19.2	5.4	1.5	100
	2	19.8	54.2	13.0	9.9	2.3	0.8	100
	3	16.5	46.8	26.6	8.9	1.3	0	100
4. The most common weapon brought to school is a firearm.	1	6.9	10.8	20.8	33.1	26.9	1.5	100
	2	0.8	8.4	17.6	51.9	21.4	0	100
	3	0	6.3	11.4	44.3	38.0	0	100
5. Gangs are the main reason students bring guns to school.	1	5.4	17.7	30.8	27.7	17.7	0.8	100
	2	1.5	15.3	26.7	50.4	6.1	0	100
	3	1.3	8.9	24.1	51.9	13.9	0	100
6. Most schools have metal detectors installed.	1	0.8	7.7	30.0	41.5	19.2	0.8	100
	2	0	3.8	18.3	55.0	22.9	0	100
	3	1.3	1.3	12.7	43.0	41.8	0	100
7. Students feel safer with metal detectors installed.	1	20.0	33.1	30.8	9.2	6.9	0	100
	2	4.6	32.1	32.8	28.2	2.3	0	100
	3	3.8	41.8	34.2	16.5	3.8	0	100
8. Wearing certain types of clothing put students in danger.	1	6.9	17.7	22.3	26.2	26.9	0	100
	2	9.2	52.7	24.4	10.7	3.1	0	100
	3	7.6	46.8	26.6	12.7	5.1	1.3	100
9. Drug deals frequently occur on school grounds.	1	6.9	26.9	32.3	19.2	14.6	0	100
	2	11.5	61.1	10.7	16.0	0.8	0	100
	3	8.9	48.1	11.4	25.3	3.8	2.5	100
10. Racial tensions cause violent conflicts.	1	7.7	32.3	30.0	22.3	6.9	0.8	100
	2	16.8	67.2	9.9	5.3	0.8	0	100
	3	7.6	57.0	13.9	17.7	2.5	1.3	100
11. Schools with an open-door policy are more susceptible to school violence.	1	9.2	31.5	35.4	16.2	4.6	3.1	100
	2	14.5	39.7	33.6	11.5	0.8	0	100
	3	20.3	46.8	20.3	10.1	1.3	1.3	100
12. There are areas of the school campus that safer than others.	1	13.1	42.3	21.5	16.9	6.2	0	100
	2	13.7	60.3	16.0	9.9	0	0	100
	3	6.3	74.7	11.4	7.6	1	1	100
13. Verbal insults are common in most schools.	1	43.1	46.2	9.2	0.8	0.8	0	100
	2	47.3	50.4	0.8	1.5	0	0	100
	3	35.4	59.5	3.8	0	1.3	0	100
14. Pushing, shoving, or grabbing is most common in most schools.	1	33.8	45.4	16.2	3.1	1.5	0	100
	2	30.5	58.8	5.3	5.3	0	0	100
	3	34.2	48.1	8.9	7.6	1.3	0	100

15. There is no way to avoid behavior stated in #14.	1	1.5	23.1	23.1	35.4	16.2	0.8	100
	2	0	18.3	22.1	51.9	7.6	0	100
	3	5.1	15.2	12.7	57.0	10.1	0	100
16. Major school problems begin with stealing, name-calling, cursing, harassment and physical contact.	1	27.7	56.2	12.3	2.3	0	1.5	100
	2	15.3	66.4	12.2	5.3	0	0.8	100
	3	15.2	77.2	3.8	3.8	0	0	100
17. When witnessing violent acts, most students just watch without attempting to get help.	1	12.3	46.9	28.5	12.3	0	0	100
	2	12.2	61.1	12.2	13.7	0.8	0	100
	3	11.4	51.9	15.2	19.0	2.5	0	100
18. School violence is related to sub-culture gangs and groups.	1	7.7	20.8	43.8	24.6	3.1	0	100
	2	0.8	27.5	41.2	29.8	0.8	0	100
	3	2.5	29.1	48.1	15.2	5.1	0	100
19. Schools in the mid-south area are safe and secure from crime.	1	10.0	35.4	41.5	10.8	1.5	0.8	100
	2	26.0	61.1	10.7	1.5	0.8	0	100
	3	16.5	65.8	13.9	3.8	0	0	100
20. Schools handle misbehavior effectively.	1	5.4	22.3	33.1	34.6	3.8	0.8	100
	2	7.6	42.0	38.2	12.2	0	0	100
	3	10.1	39.2	27.8	19.0	2.5	1.3	100
21. Schools in the mid-south area can be described "good places to learn."	1	7.7	36.2	41.5	6.2	3.8	4.6	100
	2	2.3	39.7	43.5	10.7	3.1	0.8	100
	3	6.3	65.8	24.1	2.5	1.3	0	100
22. In general, parents do not take responsibility for their children's behavior.	1	7.7	21.5	23.1	34.6	12.3	0.8	100
	2	6.9	45.0	25.2	21.4	1.5	0	100
	3	13.9	51.9	11.4	22.8	0	0	100
23. Most parents really don't seem to know what goes on in schools.	1	10.8	50.8	20.8	13.8	1.5	2.3	100
	2	6.1	71.0	13.0	9.9	0	0	100
	3	15.2	67.1	10.1	7.6	0	0	100
24. Conflict resolution instruction would be an effective way of reducing school violence.	1	7.7	33.8	41.5	13.1	1.5	2.3	100
	2	13.0	58.0	22.9	6.1	0	0	100
	3	16.5	54.4	21.5	5.1	2.5	0	100
25. Cultural sensitivity would help decrease school violence.	1	9.2	32.3	48.5	6.2	2.3	1.5	100
	2	11.5	60.3	20.6	6.9	0.8	0	100
	3	13.9	50.6	25.3	7.6	0	2.5	100
26. The rate of suspensions is directly related to the level of school violence at a particular site.	1	4.6	26.2	55.4	11.5	0.8	1.5	100
	2	1.5	27.5	44.3	26.0	0.8	0	100
	3	2.5	17.7	34.2	38.0	5.1	2.5	100
27. Conflicts occur as a result of varying dress styles and music preferences.	1	1.5	22.3	24.6	33.1	15.4	3.1	100
	2	2.3	28.2	34.4	32.1	2.3	0.8	100
	3	1.3	16.5	38.0	39.2	5.1	0	100

Group 1 Represents Students
Group 2 Represents Preservice
Group 3 Represents Practicing

Percentages of total respondents to survey items 28-30 were as follows (see Table 3).

Table 3: Percentages of all respondents to questions 28-30.

Question	Yes	No	0	Other	Total
28. Do you think there are initiation rites for incoming students?	16.5	77.9	5.6	0	100.0
29. Do you think drugs are easily available on or around schools in this area?	72.6	24.4	2.6	0.3	100.0
30. Have you ever personally seen a weapon at school?	34.1	65.6	0	0.3	100.0

Results from a univariate analysis of variance showed that no significant difference was indicated between the interactions of "School and Status" in the perceptions of school violence with F (2, 334) = .658 and p-value < .519. There was, however, a significant difference in perceptions of school violence between the two "School" groups (Middle School and High School) with F (1, 334) = 14.298 and p-value <.000. A significant difference also was indicated among the three "Status" subgroups (Students, Preservice Teachers, Practicing Teachers) with F (2, 334) = 23.180 and p-value <.000 (see Table 4).

Table 4: ANOVA results.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	5076.060[a]	5	1015.212	12.710	.000
	2062096.7	1	2062096.7	25815.777	.000
Status	3703.077	2	1851.538	23.180	.000
School	1142.093	1	1142.093	14.298	.000
Status*School	105.063	2	52.532	.658	.519
Error	26679.046	334	79.877		
Total	2333028.0	340			
Corrected Total	31755.106	339			

[a] R Squared= .160 (Adjusted R Square = .147)

*P-value <.05

Multiple comparisons with regard to "Status" grouping indicate all combinations were significant at the .05 probability level (see Table 5).

Table 5: Significant differences in the multiple comparison of status.

Test	Status	Status	Std. Error	Significant Difference
Scheffe	Student	Preservice	1.1064	.000
		Practicing	1.2750	.023
	Preservice	Student	1.1064	.000
		Practicing.	1.2731	.007
	Practicing	Student	1.2750	.023
		Preservice	1.2731	.007

*P-value <.05

Within the "School" group, Middle School respondents perceived violence as being more prevalent within their environment than did the High School respondents. Mean scores and standard error are shown Table 6 below.

Table 6: School means and standard errors.

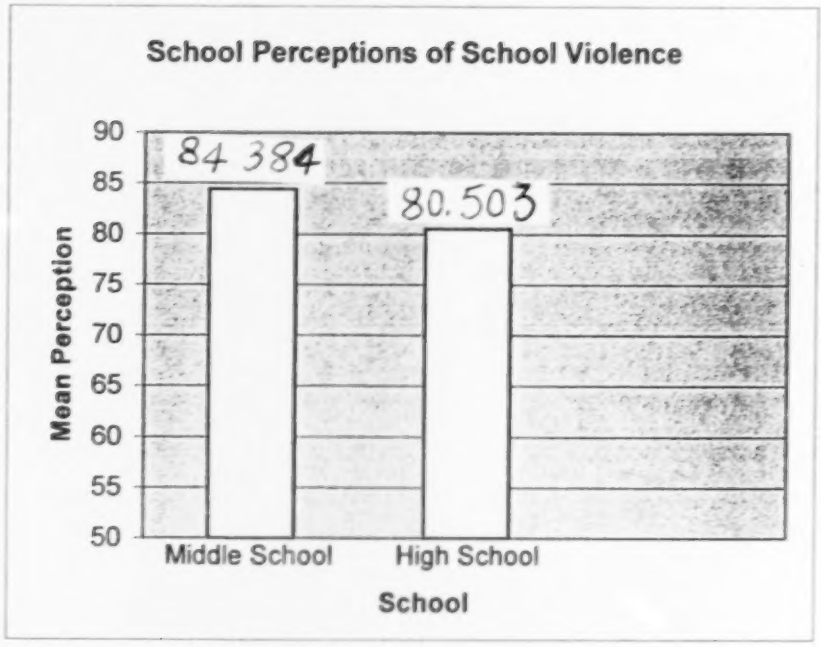
School	Mean	Std. Error
MidSchool	84.384	0.772
HighSchool	80.503	0.676

Within the "Status" group, preservice teachers had the highest perception of violence; practicing teachers had a somewhat lower perception of violence, and students had the lowest perception of violence scores on the survey as indicated by their respective mean scores (see Table 7).

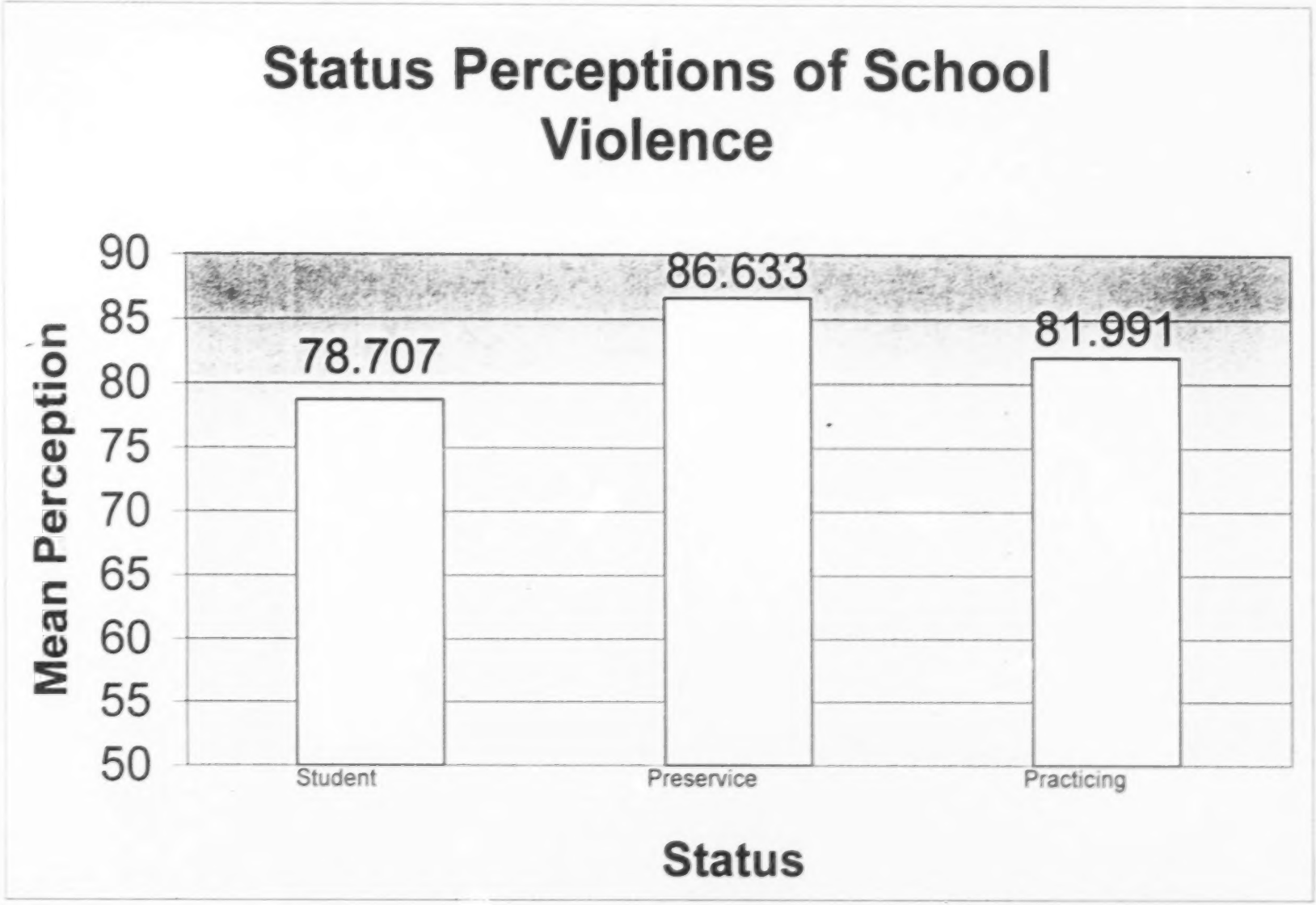
Table 7: Status means and standard errors.

Status	Mean	Std. Error
Student	78.707	0.785
Preservice	86.633	0.860
Practicing	81.991	1.006

84.384 80.503



BEST COPY AVAILABLE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE